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### THE EMPEROR MICHAEL III IN APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

In several studies Henri Grégoire has revealed and emphasized the deep impression left in popular tradition and in popular songs by Michael's successful military activities against the eastern Arabs. I wish now to show that not only Michael's successes in the East have left their trace in popular tradition, but also his victory in the north, over the Ros-Russians who in 860 for the first time attacked Constantinople. Here I have in view an apocryphal work known both in Byzantine and in Slavo-Russian literature, the so-called *Revelation of Methodius of Patara*. According to the best authority on this work, V. M. Istrin, there are three Greek versions of the *Revelation*, a brief Latin version, two Slavonic versions, and finally an interpolated Slavonic version.<sup>2</sup>

In Methodius' *Revelation* the whole history of the world, beginning with Adam and ending with the second Advent of Christ, is set within seven thousands of years. For us the most interesting period is the seventh thousand, particularly during this period an episode of the last Emperor-Liberator, who, at a moment of crisis awakes as if from sleep, and later delivers his Empire to God in Jerusalem. According to the three Greek versions of the *Revelation*, during the seventh thousand years, the Ishmaelites will come out and assemble in Gabaon, where many Greeks will fall at the point of their swords. Ishmaelite domination will be cruel. They will devastate Persia, Rumania, Cilicia, Syria, and other regions, and in their pride they will say, "No Christians will escape our hands."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I have included this study in my book, "The First Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860-861" (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> V. Istrin, *Revelation of Methodius of Patara and Apocryphal Visions of Daniel in Byzantine and Slavo-Russian literature* (*Gtenija v Obščestve Istorii i Drevnostei Rossijskich* [Moscow, 1897], book II, III, IV; 1898, book I, 133-162 (Vision of Daniel). There are also an Armenian and a Syrian version of the *Revelation*. Istrin calls the three Greek versions one, three, and four. No text of version two appears in Istrin's edition.

<sup>3</sup> See Istrin's summary of this section of the *Revelation* in Russian, *op. cit.* (1897), II, 19-22. Γαβαὼν — Gibeon is an ancient city of Canaan, in Palestine.

Then suddenly an Emperor of the Greeks or Romans will rise upon them with great strength; he will wake as a man from sleep, who has drunk wine, whom men regarded as dead and worthless. He will march upon them from the Ethiopian sea and will inflict sword and devastation down to Ethrimbos, that is to say down to their own fatherland.<sup>4</sup> His yoke will be seven times heavier than that of the Ishmaelites. Then after his victories wonderful fertility will spread over the earth; and all men will live in peace. The Greeks will rebuild cities, and the priests will be released from violence.<sup>5</sup> But during this peace a disaster will befall them. Then the gates of the north will open, and the forces of the peoples who have been shut within will emerge. The whole earth will be shocked by their appearance; men will be frightened and will flee away and hide themselves upon mountains, in caves and tombs. For the peoples coming from the north eat human flesh and drink blood of animals like water and eat unclean things.<sup>6</sup> But after seven years, when they have captured the city of Ioppe, the Lord God will send one of his Archistrategi and smite them in a moment. Then the Greek Emperor will come to Jerusalem, and ten years and a half after his coming the Antichrist will be born.

The same story is told in the third and fourth Greek versions (1897, IV, 62-63; 72-73). But in the third version we read in addition that before marching on the Agarenes the Emperor will come out through the so-called Golden Gate,<sup>7</sup> and during three days he

<sup>4</sup> The first Greek version: τότε αἰφνιδίως ἐπαναστατήσεται ἐπ' αὐτοὺς βασιλεὺς Ἑλλήνων ἦτοι Ῥωμαίων μετὰ μεγάλου θυμοῦ καὶ ἐξυπνισθήσεται καθάπερ ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ ὕπνου καθὼς πᾶν οἶνον, ὃν ἐλογίζοντο οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὡσεὶ νεκρὸν καὶ εἰς οὐδὲν χρησιμεύοντα, οὗτος ἐξελεύσεται ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης Αἰθιοπῶν καὶ βάλλει ῥομφαίαν καὶ ἐρήμωσιν ἕως Ἐθριμβον ἦτοι εἰς τὴν πατρίδα αὐτῶν, *op. cit.*, IV, 40-41. Ethrimbos is of course the name of the city of Yathrib, in Arabia, later Medina. See for instance, *Theophanis Chronographia* (de Boor), I, 365: τοῦ Ἐθρίβου; also index p. 600: Ἐθρίβος, ἡ μεγάλη Ἀραβία.

<sup>5</sup> καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν τὰς πόλεις καὶ ἐλευθερωθήσονται οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐκ τῶν ἀναγκῶν αὐτῶν, *op. cit.* (1897), IV, 43 (first version).

<sup>6</sup> Τότε ἀνοιχθήσονται αἱ πύλαι τοῦ βορρᾶ καὶ ἐξελεύσονται αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν ἔθνων, οἱ ἦσαν καθειργμένοι ἐνδοθεν, καὶ σαλευθήσεται πᾶσα ἡ γῆ ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν καὶ θροήσονται οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἐκφεύξονται καὶ κρύψουσιν ἑαυτοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη καὶ τὰ σπήλαια καὶ ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι . . . τὰ γὰρ ἐρχόμενα ἔθνη ἀπὸ βορρᾶ ἐσθίουσι σάρκα καὶ πίνουν αἷμα θηρίων ὡς ὕδωρ καὶ ἐσθίουσι τὰ ἀκάθαρτα. *Op. cit.* (1897), IV, 44 (first version).

<sup>7</sup> ἐξελεύσεται διὰ τῆς πύλης λεγομένης Χρυσίου (p. 62). Through the Golden Gate the emperors made their official entries into Constantinople.

will worship and pray before the Lord God (p. 62). In the brief Latin version we have "Surget autem rex christianorum et proeliabit cum eis (Sarracenis) et occidet eos gladio . . . ita erit adventus Gog et Magog, et cum fuerit ita paxfi reserabuntur portae Caspiae in lateribus aquilonis . . ." (pp. 81-82). The text of the first and second Slavonic versions is identical with that of the first Greek version (1897, IV, 97-99; 112-113).

These texts fail to give the name of the Emperor-Liberator. But his characterization as a man who woke as if from sleep, who has drunk wine, and who was regarded as worthless, entirely coincides with the traditional picture of Michael III "the Drunkard," as it has been given in later Byzantine tradition, intentionally distorted. The story that in his victorious fight against the Arabs, he reached Yathrib-Medina, in Arabia, is doubtless an exaggeration; but it shows that Michael's war in the east was in reality unusually successful, and his brilliant victory gained over the Arabs at Poson in 863 has left in later popular tradition the legend that he reached the cradle of Muhammedanism in the depth of Arabia. The words of the *Revelation* that after the peace with the Arabs the Greeks will rebuild cities may reflect the historical fact of the restoration under Michael III of the walls of Nicaea and Ancyra. That the priests will be released from violence seems clearly a reference to the close of the iconoclastic period and the restoration of iconveneration in 843. Finally the highly colored description of the abominable customs of the people who invaded the Empire from the north, and who are without doubt the Russians, may be compared with the description of the Russian invaders, as we have it in Photius' sermons on the Ros, especially the second. With an exaggeration like that of Michael's advance to Yathrib-Medina in Arabia, the *Revelation* also has the Russians capture the city of Ioppe, that is to say, the city of Jaffa in Palestine. The end of the *Revelation* story narrating the coming of the Greek Emperor to Jerusalem and the birth of Antichrist, is a pure legend, which was wide-spread in the Middle Ages.

If we turn now to the so-called interpolated Slavonic version of the *Revelation* of Methodius of Patara we find the name of the Emperor-Liberator: it was Michael. As early as about seventy-five year ago, in 1875, A. Veselovski, who was acquainted with the Greek text of the *Revelation* and its interpolated Slavonic versions, showed that the latter included some fragments from other apocryphal texts, a part of the *Vision of Daniel* and a part of the Vi-

sion of Andrew the Simpleton. Veselovski writes that in comparison with older versions, the Russian interpolated versions of Methodius supply us with two new elements: they give the name of Michael as that of the Emperor-Liberator, and they mention that at the moment of danger Michael was not in Constantinople; he was absent, and an angel brought him from Rome. In his study Veselovski was inclined to identify Michael with the Emperor Michael Palaeologus, who in 1261 restored the Byzantine Empire; in the same study Veselovski compares Michael with Michaylik, who appears in the Ukrainian tale of *The Golden Gates*.<sup>8</sup> Five years later (in 1881) in his studies on South-Russian epics (*byliny*), Veselovski once more referred to the interpolated Russian version of the *Revelation of Methodius*, in which the Archangel Michael brought the Tsar Michael from Rome to Saint Sophia in Constantinople, and the Tsar defeated the Ishmaelites. Finally Veselovski points out that the episode of the northern peoples Gog and Magog, who in their destructive advance reach Jerusalem, is inserted from the *Life of Saint Andrew the Simpleton*. In the same study Veselovski compares the Emperor Michael with a Russian epic hero (*Bogatyr*) Michael Danilovich.<sup>9</sup> Michael III did not occur to Veselovski. The statement that the Emperor in the moment of danger was out of Constantinople suggested to him the Emperor-Liberator Michael VIII Palaeologus, who came to save Constantinople from without.

In the interpolated Slavonic version occurs the name of Michael as the Emperor-Liberator. We read: "And then an endless multitude will be destroyed by the Tsar Michael, and others will be driven away like cattle; the pagan Ishmaelites will be humiliated from fear of God, and they will bow before the Tsar Michael saying 'We are thy prisoners.' . . . Michael's reign will last thirty-three years, as in the days of Noah . . . and the Lord will order Michael to hide himself in an island in the sea; Michael will go on board a ship, and God will bring him by wind into an island in the sea and

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<sup>8</sup> A. N. Veselovski, "Essays in the History of Christian Legend, II, Legend of a Returning Emperor," *Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction* (May, 1875), 48-130; esp. pp. 60-63; 77; 78-79 (in Russian). On this study see Istrin, *op. cit.* (1897), II, 175, 177-178, 180-182.

<sup>9</sup> A. N. Veselovski, "South-Russian Epics (Byliny)," *Supplement (Prilozenie)* to vol. XXXIX of the *Zapiski* of the Academy of Science, no. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1881), 3-60; on the *Revelation of Methodius* pp. 9-10. This study was reprinted with the same pagination in *Sbornik Otdelenija Russkago Jazyka i Slovesnosti* of the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg, t. XXII, no. 2 (1881). Both in Russian.

he will stay there till the fixed day; and God will open the western mountains, which Alexander of Macedon shut up. . . . And after Michael's reign, for lawlessness of those men, God will open the western mountains, and Gog, Magog, and Aneg (Anak) will spring out of them . . . and men coming from the north will start to eat human flesh and drink blood like water. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

Istrin is the first to identify the Michael of the Slavonic interpolated version of the *Revelation* and of some other Russian versions with Michael III. He writes:

"The most widely spread name of the Emperor-Victor, who in some texts appears as the last Tsar, is the name of Michael. . . . The spread of Michael's name may have been due to some historical fact, and the history of Byzantium may have given foundation for it. I am inclined to see the first stimulus to the popularity of the name of Michael in the Emperor Michael III, under whom the attack of Askold and Dir on Tsargrad occurred. Such an event as the siege of Tsargrad by the Russians, which has left its trace in written literature, undoubtedly could not help being reflected in the popular imagination. Photius' speech serves as a brilliant testimony of the importance of the event. One may notice some common traits between the historical Tsar Michael and the legendary Michael. Not to mention the fact that under the Emperor Michael III the domination of the Arabs came to its close, we may observe some details common to the two. According to legend, during the attack of the enemies the Tsar-Victor is hiding himself somewhere, in various versions in various ways; during the attack of Askold and Dir the Emperor Michael was not in the city; he was on an expedition against the Arabs in Cappadocia; and in Greek texts the Tsar will come from the east. In the *Vision of Andrew the Simpleton* the Tsar who will deliver his empire to God in Jerusalem comes out of Arabia. It is not essential that reality did not correspond to legend; to the popular fancy Michael who had concluded a peace, although not a very honorable one, with his enemies, appeared a victor who had delivered the city from barbarians. All the more this fancy might have been strengthened and the people might have looked upon Michael as upon a messenger of God, because the deliverance of Tsargrad from the enemy took place at a

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<sup>10</sup> Istrin, *op. cit.* (1897), IV, 123-126. The entire text of the interpolated version on pp. 115-131.

solemn church ceremony: the Patriarch carried along the walls of the capital the sacred garment of the Mother of God."<sup>11</sup>

I am myself not only inclined to share Istrin's speculations but I am absolutely sure that the *Revelation of Methodius of Patara* deals with Michael III and must serve as a new element in the rehabilitation of the name and brilliant military exploits of that undeservedly degraded Emperor, whose vindication has been so energetically proclaimed by Grégoire. Of course it is unfortunate that the Greek texts of the *Revelation* which are at present known to us fail to mention Michael's name. But it is not to be forgotten that we have no old Greek texts of the legend; if earlier versions of the legend had come down to us, they might have contained his name; the more so as, according to our best authorities on this question (A. Veselovski and Istrin), the legend of the Tsar Michael came to the Slavs by way of translation from Greek originals.<sup>12</sup>

Finally I wish to add one more detail, which in my opinion may serve as a decisive factor in this question. In the interpolated Slavonic version of the *Revelation*, as I have pointed out above, we read that the Lord commanded Michael to go to an island in the sea where he would stay till the fixed day (*do recennago dni*). What is the origin of the story of Michael's going to an island in the sea? In "the fixed or appointed day" of the *Revelation* I see the fatal day of Michael's murder. He was assassinated by Basil in the Palace of St. Mamas September 24, 867. Now, after S. J. Pargoire's *Study on St. Mamas*, we may say that the position of the suburb of St. Mamas, where the palace, the church, and a private Imperial hippodrome were located, has been definitely demonstrated: the suburb of St. Mamas was situated on the European shore of the Bosphorus, opposite to Scutari, at the modern Beshiktash.<sup>13</sup> But in Greek sources the location of St. Mamas is not exactly fixed, so that in historical literature it has been located in

<sup>11</sup> Istrin, *op. cit.* (1897), II, 182-184.

<sup>12</sup> See Istrin, *op. cit.* (1897), II, 182, 184, 205.

<sup>13</sup> S. J. Pargoire, "Le Saint-Mamas de Constantinople," *Transactions (Izvestiya)* of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, vol. IX, nos. 1-2 (1904), 302. Pargoire repeats the same conclusions in his paper read at a meeting of the Russian Archaeological Institute. J. Pargoire, "St. Mamas, le quartier russe de Constantinople," *Echos d'Orient*, XI (1908), 203-210.

various places, in Blachernae, on the Propontis, on the Euxine.<sup>14</sup> Two Greek sources, Theophanes Continuatus and Genesius, place the Church of St. Mamas on the Euxine and on the Propontis.<sup>15</sup> Probably in connection with the indications of Theophanes Continuatus and Genesius that the Church of St. Mamas was situated on the sea, on the Euxine or on the Propontis, the idea of an island made its appearance. We have an unexpected confirmation of this hypothesis in an Arab chronicle of Eutyches of Alexandria. Eutyches, or in Arabic Sa'id-ibn-Bitriq, a physician and historian, who was elected Patriarch of Alexandria in 933, died in 940. In his brief chronicle, which begins with the creation of the world, we read the following lines on Michael III and his favorite Basil: "There was a general whose name was Basil. And (Michael) put him at the head of all his generals and officials. And one day the Emperor Michael went for recreation to an island which was situated opposite to Constantinople, in the middle of the sea which is called Pontos. And the General, Basil, assaulted him and killed him in the church which was on the island."<sup>16</sup> If we compare Eutyches' island in the sea where Michael went for recreation and was assassinated with the island in the sea of the *Revelation* into which our Lord brought him and in which he stayed till the fixed or fatal day of his violent death, and if we take into account that the island in the sea in Eutyches' chronicle was the place of the recreation and death of Michael III, there is no doubt whatever that Michael of the *Revelation* means Michael III.

As we know, a part of the apocryphal composition *Daniel's Vision* has been incorporated in the interpolated Slavonic version of

<sup>14</sup> See A. van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople* (London, 1899), 90: the Hippodrome of St. Mamas was in Blachernae. Millingen gives also other opinions. A. Vogt, *Basile I* (Paris, 1908), 42: St. Mamas, on the seashore, on the other side of Constantinople.

<sup>15</sup> *Theoph. Cont.*, 197: τὸν ἐν Εὐξείνῳ ἀνεγνημένον ναὸν τοῦ ἁγίου Μάμαντος. *Genesius*, 102: ἐν τοῖς κατὰ Προποντίδα παλατίοις περιφανέσιν, ἐνθα ναὸς τοῦ μεγαλομάρτυρος Μάμαντος.

<sup>16</sup> *Contextio gemmarum, sive Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*. Interprete Ed. Pocockio (Oxford, 1658), II, 462. New edition by L. Cheikho, *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, II (Beryti-Parisiis, 1909), 67, lines 2-5 (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptores arabici. Textus. Series tertia, tomi VI et VII*). Pocock's Latin translation is reprinted in Migne, *P. G.*, CXI, col. 1139. I have given a Russian version of this passage in my book, *Byzantium and the Arabs during the Macedonian Dynasty* (St. Petersburg, 1902), supplement, p. 20.

the *Revelation of Methodius of Patara*. *Daniel's Vision* has come down to us in several Greek versions and in Slavonic versions as well.<sup>17</sup> Greek versions, like those of the *Revelation*, fail to give the name of Michael. One text calls the Emperor-Liberator who will defeat the Ishmaelites, John (Ἰωάννης), probably John Comnenus, whom four angels will bring to St. Sophia and there crown Emperor (p. 137. Mount Athos, Monastery Kutlumush, no. 217). Three Greek texts mention invasions from the north: in one version we read that "then will rise the peoples in the north, who never before waged war" (p. 140. Bodl. Library, *Cod. Barroccianus*, No. 145); the same manuscript relates that "a fight will arise from the northern side, and the people will roam about (περιπατήσῃ), and the coastland will suffer."<sup>18</sup> Then the third version says, "And after him another emperor from the north will rise, doing great foulness, much wrong, and great injustice."<sup>19</sup> It would be hazardous to conjecture that "another emperor" (ἕτερος βασιλεὺς) hints at the Russian leader of the expedition against Constantinople, Askold. The last Greek version (Paris, Nat. Library, *Fonds grecs*, no. 1295), printed by Istrin (pp. 151-155), deals with the time of Manuel II Palaeologus and has no relation whatever to this study.

Slavonic versions of *Daniel's Vision* are interesting for us because they add the name of the Tsar Michael. His legend has been discussed above. It is not irrelevant to mention that a South Slavonic version puts *Solun'*, i.e., Salonika or Thessalonica, instead of Tsargrad, where the Emperor-Liberator, according to legends, was brought by the angels. Evidently a South Slavonic compiler of this version, applying the prophecies to the Bulgarian Empire, replaced Tsargrad by a name better known to him, *Solun'* (Salonika) which had been several times in Bulgarian hands.<sup>20</sup> So the Tsar-Victor of Slavonic and Russian legends is the Tsar Michael III, the last representative of the Amorian dynasty.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Texts of *Daniel's Vision* in Istrin, *Čteniya* ... (1898), I, 133-162.

<sup>18</sup> Here is the text (*Cod. Barroc.* 145): καὶ αὐτὴ (μάχη) ἐκ νοτίου μέρους ἀναφανήσεται καὶ τὸ ἔθνος περιπατήσῃ, καὶ πρὸ τούτου παρὰ τῆς οὐαί (Istrin, pp. 142-143).

<sup>19</sup> Bodl. Library, *Cod. Canonicianus*, no. 19, s. XV: καὶ ὁπίσω αὐτὸν ἀναστήσεται ἕτερος βασιλεὺς ἀπὸ βορρᾶ καὶ ποιῶν ἀκαθαρσίας μεγάλας καὶ ἀδικίας πολλὰς καὶ ἀνομίας μεγάλας (Istrin, p. 147).

<sup>20</sup> Istrin, *op. cit.* (1897), III, 262.

<sup>21</sup> Istrin, *op. cit.* (1897), III, 325.

Let us turn now to the *Life of Saint Andrew the Simpleton*, one of the most precious documents for the cultural history of Byzantium, of which a critical edition is badly needed.<sup>22</sup> The saint lived in the tenth century, and his *Life* was compiled by his confessor, a presbyter of Saint Sophia, Nicephorus. The former opinion that the saint lived in the fifth century under the Emperor Leo I (457-474) is to be discarded. The name *Leo* which occurs in the *Life* is that of the Emperor Leo VI (886-912). As I have noted above, A. Veselovski has shown that a part of the *Life of Saint Andrew* has been incorporated in the interpolated Slavonic version of the *Revelation* of Methodius of Patara. His prophecies are interesting for our study, especially one which, if I am not mistaken, has not been examined, and which unexpectedly gives decisive proof that it deals with the activities of Michael III and his successful fighting against Arabs and Russians.<sup>23</sup>

After saying that towards the end of the world the Lord would raise up an Emperor under whom prosperity would spread among all men, the author of the *Life* relates: "And after that (the Emperor) will turn his face to the Orient and humiliate the sons of Agar; for the Lord will be irate because of their blasphemy, and because their offspring is bitter like that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

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<sup>22</sup> Detailed information on Saint Andrew the Simpleton or the Fool may be found in "Commentarius praeuius Conr. Janninghi Vitae S. Andreae Sali," in Migne, *P. G.*, CXI, Coll. 621-628 (reprinted from *Acta Sanctorum*, Maii die 28, t. VI). For brief information on Saint Andrew see Archbishop Sergius, *The Complete Liturgical Calendar (Menologion) of the Orient*, 2d ed. (Vladimir, 1901), II, 2, pp. 409-410. A. P. Rudakov, *Outlines of Byzantine Culture Based on Data from Greek Hagiography* (Moscow, 1917), 228. Both in Russian. On Saint Andrew the Simpleton there are two special studies, one in Russian, the other in English. Arch. Sergius' study was printed in the Russian magazine *Strannik*, Sept.-Dec., 1898, and separately as well. In English, Sara Murray, *A Study of the Life of Andreas the Fool for the Sake of Christ*. Munich Dissertation (Borna: Noske, 1910), pp. 135 and plate 1. Unfortunately I have not been able to consult these. But according to Paul Maas' brief review of Miss Murray's dissertation, it fails to give much new material, and the eschatological section of the *Life*, which particularly interests us in this study, has not been studied by the author, *Byz. Zeitschrift*, XXI (1912), 317-319.

<sup>23</sup> I use the edition of *Vita S. Andreae Sali* in Migne, *P. G.*, CXI, coll. 627-888. This is a reprint from *Acta Sanctorum*, Maii t. VI, Coll. 1-101, supplement. Some excerpts were published in A. Vasiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina* (Moscow, 1893), 50-58. A complete Slavonic version in the *Collection of the Lives of Saints* by the Metropolitan Macarius, vol. III, under Oct. 2.

Therefore He will instigate and arouse the Emperor of the Romans against them, and he will annihilate them and will destroy their children by fire; and they, surrendered into his hands, will be given up to the most violent flame. And Illyricum will be again restored to the Roman Empire, and Egypt will bring its tribute. And he will put his hand upon the sea and will tame the fair peoples and will abase the enemies under his power; and his empire will last thirty-two years. . . .'<sup>24</sup>

In this passage of prophecy, absolutely unexpectedly we discover two historical facts: the restoration of Illyricum to the Empire, and the payment of tribute by Egypt to the Empire. In my opinion these two historical facts belong to the period of Michael III.

The province of Illyricum was for long an apple of discord between Byzantium and the Papacy. This question came to the fore again when Bulgaria was converted to Christianity and Pope Nicholas I in his claims of the rights of the See of Rome over Illyricum, met such stiff resistance from Michael III that he was forced to yield.<sup>25</sup> Saint Andrew's prophecy, then, is a repercussion of a historical fact connected with Michael's period.

Saint Andrew's prophecy that Egypt will bring tribute to the Empire is extremely interesting. In my opinion this refers to the appearance of a Byzantine fleet in 853 before Damietta at the mouth of the Nile, when the city was plundered and burned and its inhabitants hastily fled. Probably six years later a Byzantine fleet reappeared before Damietta and Pelusium (al-Farama). Egypt might well have paid money for deliverance, a sort of ran-

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<sup>24</sup> καὶ ἀποκατασταθήσεται πάλιν τὸ Ἰλλυρικὸν τῇ βασιλείᾳ Ῥωμαίων, κομίσει δὲ καὶ ἡ Αἴγυπτος τὰ πάκτα αὐτῆς. Καὶ θήσει τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ τὴν δεξιὰν ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ ἡμερώσει τὰ ξανθὰ γένη, καὶ ταπεινώσει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ σκῆπτρον αὐτοῦ ἔσται τριάκοντα δύο ἔτη . . . (col. 856).

<sup>25</sup> See a very clear presentation of the question in Fr. Dvornik, *La lutte entre Byzance et Rome à propos de l'Illyricum au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Mélanges Charles Diehl*, I (Paris, 1930), 61-80; especially pp. 64-65. Also *Idem*, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Prague, 1933), 265-267. The question of Illyricum had its continuation after the death of Michael III and Pope Nicholas I, and under Basil I in 870 Pope Hadrian II had a new rebuff. Dvornik, *op. cit.*, 269.

som. If it is true that these words of Saint Andrew's prophecy refer to the attack of Damietta and Pelusium—and I am certain that it is true—this statement has still greater value because it is the only Greek text which records this important event, all our information of the attack coming from Arabic sources which fail to mention any tribute paid to the Empire.

Since the words of Saint Andrew's prophecy have now been definitely attributed to Michael's time, the mention of "fair peoples" (τὰ ξανθὰ γένη) whom he will "tame" or vanquish may refer simply to the Russian attack of 860.<sup>26</sup>

I have devoted much space to the personality of Michael III; but it is high time now to show that our common stereotyped opinion of him and his activities should be reconsidered. It is not often that an emperor's activities leave so deep a trace in popular tradition as those of Michael III against the eastern Arabs, and—I may now say—against the Russians. I cannot go so far as Grégoire does in characterizing Michael as a genius. He was assassinated in 867 at the age of twenty-eight (he was born in 839), still quite a young man, who had not had time enough to develop and display whatever talents he may have had. He certainly possessed some highly undesirable qualities which have come down to us in the purposely distorted and exaggerated Macedonian tradition which doubtless was irreconcilably hostile to the memory of the last representative of the Amorion dynasty. But it must have had some foundation in fact, and it is clear that the imperial youth indulged himself to excess in his pleasures and dissipations, which after all is not unnatural for a young man invested with absolute power. But he had energy and initiative; and in addition—and this is probably more important—he managed to choose and keep near him very talented advisers and collaborators, like his uncle Bardas, his general Petronas, who was the hero of the decisive victory at Poson in 863, some other generals, and last but not

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<sup>26</sup> It would not be irrelevant to mention here a curious translation of the Greek words τὰ ξανθὰ γένη or τὰ ξανθὰ μέλη in some Slavonic versions of apocryphal Greek texts. The Russian equivalent of the Greek adjective ξανθός is *rusy*, and later probably in the seventeenth century under the influence of political propaganda, the adjective *rusy* became *Russian*, and τὰ ξανθὰ γένη the *Russian peoples* (*Russian rody*). In some Slavonic versions instead of *rysye rody* (τὰ ξανθὰ γένη) we find *rysye brady*, i.e., *blond beards*, as a result of confusion of the Greek word τὸ γένος — *race, people*, with τὸ γένειον — *beard*. See Istrin, *Čteniya* ... (1897), III, 267, 325.

least the powerful imposing figure of the Patriarch Photius. In popular tradition, in epic and in apocryphal writings, Michael's advisers and collaborators have vanished, and his own personality is the center around which are concentrated his military successes against the eastern Arabs and Russians.

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